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Stages of Healing Brings 'Soul on Fire, The Musical' to Base

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

Stages of Healing (SOH) recently brought a musical production on base which touches on the emotional issues of love and abuse.

Every two minutes someone is sexually assaulted in this country, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Because of this, and the Department of Defense's efforts to curb sexual assault and harassment within its ranks, SOH hosted two free performances of 'Soul on Fire, The Musical,' on base June 26 and 27.

Stages of Healing brings various artists, performances and presentations to Walter Reed Bethesda, "allowing walls to be broken down, facilitating dialogue, and contributing to an overall feeling of togetherness," explained U.S. Public Health Service Lt. Cmdr. (Dr.) Micah Sickel, coordinator for SOH events on base and a behavioral health psychiatrist at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

Playwright and composer Tyrone Stanley's "Soul on Fire, The Musical," has appeared on stages nationwide. Stanley describes "Soul on Fire" as more than just a show, but a cathartic experience and educational production which speaks to the need for breaking the silence in situations of abuse.

"I came up with the concept for Soul on Fire many years ago, well before the 90s," Stanley explained. "In my childhood I experienced some of the same things dealt with in the themes in Soul on Fire. It's a story of love and redemption. It chronicles the life of a young girl who has been wronged by society. It chronicles a love story. It chronicles a tragedy."

Stanley added, "There's been no greater fulfillment for me in my work thus far than having people respond in a way that lets me know [Soul on Fire] has inspired them in some way. The characters led me down a path to my own healing. I've come to a place in which all I want to do is see people experience what I experienced creating these wonderful characters."

Air Force Capt. Natosha Smith of Walter Reed Bethesda's Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Clinic, attended the Soul on Fire performance



Soul on Fire, The Musical, cast members Je'Char Carey (left) and Tyrone Stanley perform at Walter Reed Bethesda.



Cast members from Soul on Fire, The Musical sing the opening number during a special performance at Walter Reed Bethesda.

and said, "It was amazing. It is a great way to convey a message through song and acting."

The captain said the message she took away from Soul on Fire is the deep impact sexual abuse can have on its victims internally, their relationships with others, and how they can possibly heal from that trauma.

Another message the play conveyed, and one the military emphasizes among its troops, is to let victims know they are not alone, and it's okay to speak up. "Communicate and express what you have gone through; there is help," Smith said.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey — there is an average of 237,868 victims (age 12 or older) of rape and sexual assault each year. Justice officials add 22 percent of victims were younger than age 12 when they were first raped, and 32 percent were between the ages of 12 and 17. Also, 70 percent of rape and sexual assault victims know their attacker prior to the assault, and in a



Photos by Bernard S. Little

Soul on Fire, The Musical cast member Donna Cox, performs a number from the play during a special performance at Walter Reed Bethesda June 26.

survey of college women by the Justice Department, about 90 percent of rape and sexual assault victims knew their attacker prior to the assault.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also report 25 percent of girls and 17 percent of boys are sexually abused before the age of 18, and many crimes of rape and sexual assault go unreported, added Justice Department officials.

In May, the Department of Defense (DOD) Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military was provided to Congress reporting DOD received 5,061 reports of alleged sexual assault involving one or more service members as either the victim or alleged subject (suspect). This was a 50 percent increase over the 3,374 reports received

in FY 12. Of the 5,061 reports, about 54 percent involved service member on service member crime.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said upon releasing the report, "We have a long way to go before we get close to solving this problem." He encouraged victims not to be ashamed to report the crimes and that defense officials "are all listening to you, and we will do everything we can to support you."

At Naval Support Activity Bethesda and WRNMMC, information about how to prevent and report sexual assault and harassment is available from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response office at 301-319-4087.

For more information about Stages of Healing, call Lt. Cmdr. Micah Sickel at 301-295-2492.

New CMDCM for Medical Center Comes Onboard

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) Director Brig. Gen. Jeffrey B. Clark will host a change of charge ceremony tomorrow at 1 p.m. in Memorial Auditorium to welcome WRNMMC's new Command Master Chief, CMDCM Tyrone Willis on board and relieve CMDCM Terry J. Prince, WRNMMC's first Command Master Chief.



USS Juneau (LPD 10), Sasebo, Japan; and deployed to Expeditionary Medical Facility Kuwait.

In addition, Command Master Chief Willis completed shore assignments at Naval Hospital Millington, Tenn.; BUPERS (Bureau of Naval Personnel), Millington, Tenn.; and Naval Hospital Okinawa, Japan.

Master Chief Maria Fernandez had been acting in this role during the transition.

Command Master Chief Prince became the medical center's first Senior Enlisted Leader in October 2011, a month before the ceremony saluting the integration of Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Naval Medical Center, and renaming the new facility Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. He became the first Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Defense Health Agency in February.

Command Master Chief Willis, a native of Memphis, Tenn., enlisted in the U. S. Navy in July 1985. Following completion of basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill., he reported to Naval Hospital Corps School at Great Lakes where he completed Hospital Corpsman "A" School.

Upon graduation, he reported for duty at Naval Hospital Millington, Tenn., and was designated as a National Emergency Medical Technician. His fleet assignments include Alpha Company, 2nd Medical Battalion, Second Force Service Support, Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Headquarters Battalion, Second Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C.;

Chief Willis also participated in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm – 1st Battalion 8th Marines, Second Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Strong Resolve — USS Wasp (LHD 1); Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom — USS Juneau (LPD 10).

A graduate from the Navy Senior Enlisted Academy, Class 146 and the CMC/COB Course with the 9580 designation, Command Master Chief Willis also graduated from Field Medical Service School and earned his Enlisted Surface Warfare and Fleet Marine Force designations. He has served as the Command Master Chief at Naval Hospital Beaufort, S.C., and onboard USS Ross (DDG 71) Norfolk, Va.

His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (5 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (5 awards), Combat Action Ribbon and various unit and campaign awards.

Command Master Chief Willis is married to the former Renee Anderson of Whiteville, Tenn., and has three children — Nathaniel, Jazzmine, and Jozelyn.

Bethesda Notebook

DOD Enterprise Email Migration

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center email users will transition to a Department of Defense Enterprise Email service managed by the Defense Information Systems Agency. The migration will take place Aug. 19 through 22. There are pre and post-migration steps users need to perform in order to make email migration successful. For more information, contact Luis Lopez at Luis.R.Lopez@health.mil.

Prosperity Fair

Walter Reed Bethesda's next Prosperity Fair is Tuesday from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the courtyard between Buildings 9 and 10. All are encouraged to attend.

Prostate Support Group

The Prostate Cancer Support Group meets at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center the third Thursday of every month. The next meetings will be held July 17 from 1 to 2 p.m. and 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the America Building, River Conference Room on the third floor. Spouses and partners are invited. Military identification is required for base access to Walter Reed Bethesda. For those without military ID, call the Prostate Center at 301-319-2900 at least two business days prior to event for base access. For more information, contact retired Col. (Dr.) Jane Hudak at 301-319-2918, or email jane.l.hudak.ctr@health.mil.

TeamSTEPPS Training

TeamSTEPPS (Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety) will conduct a four-hour fundamentals course July 14. There will also be a two-day train the trainer course for TeamSTEPPS July 30 to 31. TeamSTEPPS is designed to improve patient outcomes by improving communication and teamwork skills. Continuing education units are possible to attain. For registration, times and location, contact Hospital Education and Training, Navy Lt. Asia Raheem at Asia.O.Raheem@health.mil or call 301-400-2822, or Army Sgt. Derek Awantoh at Derek.Awantoh.mil@health.mil or call 301-400-0707.

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ROTC Cadets, Midshipmen Tour Pentagon and Arlington Cemetery

By Julie Smith
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

When Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) nursing student and Army Cadet Morgan Hissick first arrived at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) aboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) for a four-week summer training program, she wasn't sure what to expect.

That was before she understood the unique joint environment of the multi-service health care facility. Now at the end of the program, Hissick recognizes her role as a future military nurse and feels comfortable in her Army Combat Uniform.

"I feel like I learned a lot. I feel much more excited to get commissioned," Hissick said. "We got to see this cool joint facility, and that was so different."

Along with other Army cadets and Navy midshipmen, the nursing students combined clinical hours with observation time and exposure



Photo by Julie Smith

ROTC Midshipmen Colleen Casey views a military exhibit at Arlington National Cemetery during a tour June 27.

to military leadership behaviors, explained perioperative nurse and Navy ROTC Midshipmen Summer Training Coordinator Koa Thomas.

"I make sure they get time with nurses that are involved in the specialties the students are interested in, like midwifery or neo-natal intensive care," Thomas said.

For most of the cadets and midshipmen involved in ROTC training

at Walter Reed Bethesda, it's the first time they've worked with someone from another branch of military service, said Capt. Richard Park, a perioperative nurse and the Army ROTC clinical site coordinator.

"Everything is moving to a joint environment. It's good for (the students) to experience the cultural (service) differences," Park said. "Getting them together on a

lower level will pay dividends later on."

While the two ROTC programs have different missions, Park said, the goal is to get the nursing students exposed to as much as possible while they are here.

Even off the NSAB campus, Navy midshipmen and Army cadet nursing students were treated to a unique experience June 26 as they toured the Pentagon — a first for the

ROTC training program at Walter Reed Bethesda. The students also made a stop at Arlington National Cemetery.

Colonel Jean Barido, Deputy Assistant for Health Affairs for the Assistant Secretary of the Army, was the group's personal tour guide at the Pentagon.

Approximately 30,000 active duty and civilian workers support the Department of Defense headquarters in Washington, D.C., which houses a full-service Department of Motor Vehicles, several retail stores, 36 restaurants and 284 bathrooms, Barido said.

Highlights of the tour included the office of Gen. James F. Amos, the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and a memorial to the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, when American Airlines Flight 77 was hijacked and flown into the west side of the Pentagon, killing 64 people on board the plane and 125 people inside the building. At the time, the midshipmen and cadets were just 7 to 8-years-old.

"Seeing this makes it more real," Navy Midshipman Rebecca Rogers said as she viewed the memorial.

At the conclusion of the Pentagon tour, Barido imparted some professional advice to the nursing students.

"Take every opportunity the Army and the Navy offer you," she said. "Live your military career to the fullest you can, because it will be rewarding."

The cadets and midshipmen toured Arlington National Cemetery, visiting the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the John F. Kennedy Eternal Flame and the Spanish-American War Nurses Memorial. The walk through the cemetery was inspiring for Rogers.

"It makes you have a certain reverence and motivates you to do your job well," Rogers said. "As a nurse you bring comfort to whomever you're caring for, but to comfort those who are sacrificing their lives for our country — it's good work."

Some Civilian Positions to Change to Lower Grade at WRNMMC

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) leadership and representatives from the Civilian Human Resources Center (CHRC) held a series of information sessions last week and this week, to discuss the impact of civilian position reclassification (CPR) of WRNMMC positions.

Because of CPR, a number of currently filled positions at WRNMMC will be changed to lower grades, and some employees may be 'bumped' from their current positions.

"All of us, especially our leaders at all levels, must understand the process so we can take care of our people," stated WRNMMC Director Brig. Gen. Jeffrey B. Clark in a June 30 email to all

WRNMMC staff members.

"Unfortunately, of our over 3,500 National Capital Region-Medical (NCR-MD) civilian employees, [less than 140] serve in positions that will be changed to a lower grade; 88 of our WRNMMC civilians will be changed to a lower grade," Clark continued. Fifty-one currently filled positions at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital (Va.) will also be changed to a lower grade.

"Fortunately, the vast majority of our GS positions remained the same (over 2,700), or were changed to a higher grade (over 750)," the general added.

He explained GS civilians serving in similar positions descriptions (same series, grade) as the ones identified for change to lower grade may also be affected, which brings the

'bump/retreat' process into play.

"I have met with our CHRC leadership multiple times in order to understand the impact on our civilian staff," Clark stated. "Our CHRC team has reviewed all civilian personnel folders to ensure they are current and stands ready to meet with any and all of our civilian staff individually to ensure their questions are answered."

"Nobody likes this," Clark added. "Once again, our civilian colleagues are bearing the brunt, just as in sequestration and furlough. Please know I will do all I can to minimize the number of our civilian staff who are impacted by this. Those that are affected, we will do all we can to minimize the impact and support them."

Navy Capt. Sarah Martin, WRNMMC chief

of staff, echoed the general's sentiments during the information sessions. She also explained the civilian position reclassification process is a requirement because of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) law. BRAC resulted in three military treatment facilities within the NCR becoming two by integrating the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center and former National Naval Medical Center to create WRNMMC, and opening a new community hospital at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Michelle Belton, director of the CHRC for the NCR, said 2,797 currently filled positions within the region remained the same grade as a result of the CPR study. She added 777 currently filled positions changed to a higher grade, while 139 currently filled positions changed

to a lower grade.

Belton added "by law" the CHRC is required to implement the change to lower grade process using reduction-in-force rules. "The reason is so the employees affected by the change to lower grade receive the rights and entitlements that are owed to them."

She further explained placement of employees will be determined by ranking order, which includes employee seniority, veterans' preference, tenure and performance ratings.

The NCR-MD is one competitive area, and the NCR-MD will not separate any employees, Belton stressed, but added, an employee affected by the CPR study could be reassigned to another position within the NCR-MD at the same grade ("employees may bump/retreat to posi-

tions of employees that are at the bottom of the ranking list"), or placed in a position at a lower grade. If the latter occurs, the employee will retain the original grade for two years, retain pay at original rate, and be eligible for the Priority Placement Program for placement in position at prior grade level. After two years, the employees will revert to the lower grade but be eligible for pay retention.


Belton said all affected employees will receive a letter by Aug. 12 detailing their placement (i.e., title, series, grade, step and organization). Employees have two options: to decline the action, which will result in termination of employment via adverse action, or accept the action.

"There're a couple of

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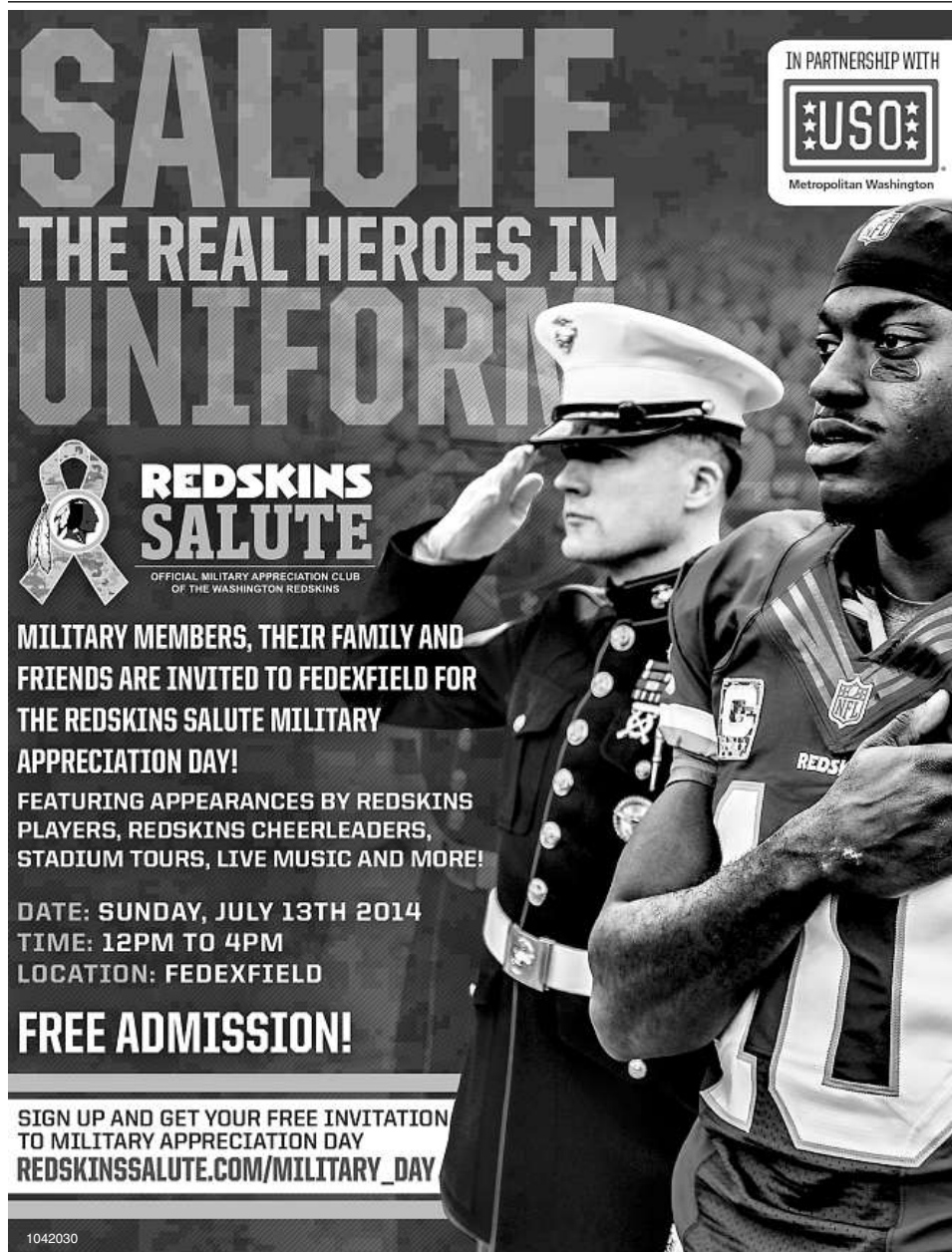
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Discovery Communications Host Barbecue at USO

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class
 Ashante Hammons
 NSAB Public Affairs staff writer

Volunteers from Discovery Communications hosted a barbecue at Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) USO Warrior and Family Center for 'Discover Your Impact Day' June 20.

Discovery Communications is the parent company to over 200 worldwide television networks worldwide, including Discovery Channel, TLC, Animal Planet, Investigation Discovery and Science, as well as U.S. joint venture network OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network and more.

Impact Day was started in 2010 to commemorate Discovery Communications' 25th anniversary. Impact Day is an annual event held in June, allowing volunteers to leave their work desks for a day in order to give back to their communities.

"It was designed with the purpose of bringing the Discovery family into their local communities to give back to organizations that support land, water, and people," said Jennifer Button, Senior Director, Corporate Relations of Discovery Impact.



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ashante Hammons

Volunteers from Discovery Communications hosts a barbecue June 20 at the USO for Discovery Impact Day. Impact Day is a national, firm-wide day of service that provides employees the opportunity to participate in locally-driven projects to support community needs.

"Discovery's Impact Day underscores our commitment to the people and places of the world that inspire our on-air stories. Sample projects include beautifying zoos and beaches, painting and rehabilitating local schools and community centers, planting trees and gardens,

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things my office has done to try and make sure our employee population is prepared for this," Belton said. She explained CHRC has reviewed all civilian personnel folders to ensure accuracy of records. She said of the nearly 3,900 records reviewed in the NCR-MD, approximately 170 have missing documentation. CHRC is attempting to contact employees with missing documentation and all employees are encouraged to review their records to ensure accuracy. Records can be accessed through My Biz on the CPOL website at www.cpol.army.mil. Employees should review their records no later than July 16, and provide updated resumes to NCR_MD.CHRC@health.mil by the same date.

For more information about the CPR, individuals are encouraged to call the CHRC Hot Line at 301-319-8387.

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with children

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Member with her three children since 2007

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'We Lead, We Partner, We Care...Every time, Everywhere'

Walter Reed Bethesda Salutes Air Force Nurses

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

Saluting Air Force nurses past and present, the Walter Reed Bethesda community celebrated the 65th birthday of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) Nurse Corps on July 1.

On July 1, 1949, the Air Force Nurse Corps was established. A total of 1,199 Army nurses on active duty (307 regular and 892 reserve officers) transferred to the Air Force and formed the nucleus of its nurse corps, according to the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Col. Lori Macias, guest speaker at the Air Force Nurse Corps' 65th birthday celebration at Walter Reed Bethesda last week, explained the USAF Total Nursing Force includes active duty, guard and reserve nurses. She added civilian nurses, Air Force enlisted medics, and sister service nursing members also contribute to the USAF Total Nursing Force's effectiveness.

Chief Nurse of the 779th Medical Group at Joint Base Andrews' Malcolm Grow Medical Clinic, Macias said the mission of the Air Force Nurse

Corps "is to advance nursing practice, develop nursing leaders, and promote health for all we serve." She added the corps' strategic goals include "developing the Total Nursing Force, advancing Total Nursing Practices across the spectrum of health from all specialties, and positioning the Total Nursing Force to support global health on the ground and in the air."

She said Air Force nurses have dual responsibilities — one as health care providers, and two, as members of the nation's defense forces. "We need to know what our military missions are, how we relate [to those missions] and what warfighters need from us. Our second role as nurses is doing the best we can to get into the specialties we love [and become the best trained to be able to deliver the best care]."

A flight nurse who served in Operation Desert Storm/Operation Desert Shield, Macias encouraged nurses to take advantage of the educational, training and assignment opportunities available to them. "In the long run, you become a very strong person [by doing so]," she explained. "You have to grow and morph."

She also encouraged nurses and leaders to share their knowledge, in addition to asking lots of questions. Other "pearls" she offered included "never burn bridges; teach with every opportunity and explain the 'why'; keep your nose clean; step up, lead and be a good follower; and show results."

Following her presentation, Macias was joined by the Air Force Nurse Corps' most junior officer at Walter Reed Bethesda, 2nd Lt. Krista Ayran, to cut the cake commemorating the 65th birthday of the Air Force Nurse Corps.

Ayran, a critical care nurse on Walter Reed Bethesda's Surgical Intensive Care Unit, has been at the medical center since February. She said she found Macias' presentation very informative, and looks forward to putting the colonel's advice into practice.

"Since the Air Force Nurse Corps emerged from the Army Nurse Corps in July 1949, Air Force nursing service personnel have excelled in providing dedicated care to their customers," stated retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Barbara Brannon,

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Photo by Bernard S. Little

Air Force 2nd Lt. Krista Ayran, a critical care nurse on Walter Reed Bethesda's Surgical Intensive Care Unit, and Col. Lori Macias, chief nurse of the 779th Medical Group, cut the cake celebrating the 65th birthday of the Air Force Nurse Corps at Walter Reed Bethesda July 1.

Defense Health Care Leader Calls on GME Graduates to Lead

By Katrina Skinner
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

Medical professionals who serve in uniform enable the military to provide the nation a strong defense and security strategy, the defense department top civilian doctor told National Capital Consortium (NCC) program graduates, their families and others who attended the NCC commencement June 20 at the Strathmore Music Center in Bethesda, Md.

Now is the time for the more than 250 interns, residents and fellows who graduated from the NCC Graduate Medical Education (GME) program to lead, added Dr. Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense (health affairs).

The NCC GME program takes trainees through curriculums of varying lengths in more than 70 medical and allied health concentrations, with many of the gradu-



Photo by Katrina Skinner

More than 250 service members from all branches graduated from National Capital Consortium Graduate Medical Education programs during a ceremony June 20 at the Strathmore Music Center in Bethesda, Md.

ates completing their training at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Reflecting on his own journey in medicine and the military, Woodson said, "I've had the great opportunity to serve in uniform, in private practice, in academia and now overseeing one of the great institutions in American society — our Military Health System (MHS)."

An internal medicine physician and general and vascular surgeon, Woodson rose to the rank of brigadier general in the

U.S. Army Reserve and served in deployments to Saudi Arabia (Operation Desert Storm), Kosovo, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He also served as a senior medical officer with the National Disaster Management System, where he responded to the Sept. 11 attack in New York City.

"You made this investment in your country, four, five and six years ago," Woodson told the graduates who completed their additional medical training in specialties including pediatrics,

internal medicine, family medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, cardiology, rheumatology, hematology-oncology and other health care concentrations.

Woodson added their "investment came at a time when we were deeply enmeshed in two wars; when the news of the day from the field of combat was sometimes grim. For some of you, this investment also came after your own experiences as a deployed Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine."

He reminded them why their

graduation was different. "You've chosen to serve your fellow man and your country — and that matters in very profound ways. Military medicine is a key enabler of the national security strategy, national defense strategy and the national military strategy."

Woodson explained continuous improvement of patient-centered delivery of health services within MHS military treatment facilities, is key to its strategies to achieve and sustain readiness, better care, better health and best value.

He concluded his remarks congratulating the graduates, who are part of the MHS and essential to providing world-class care to approximately 9.6 million beneficiaries. "Good luck with your future careers and, above all, thank you for serving this country."

For more information about the graduate medical education program, call 301-295-0537.

Follow the Leader: Wash Your Hands!

By Sharon Renee Taylor
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

"The point is not to do remarkable things, but to do the ordinary with the conviction of its immense importance," Walter Reed Bethesda Director Army Col. (Dr.) Jeffrey B. Clark, a family medicine physician said, quoting Teilhard de Chardin, a French philosopher and Jesuit priest, while reminding staff of the importance of hand washing.

Hand washing is the single most effective way to stop the spread of disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) ranks above the nationwide average of all hospitals and medical facilities, civilian or military, in hand hygiene.

"The nationwide average [for hand washing] is about 50 to 60 percent. We're a little bit above that," explained Raymond Litten, a registered nurse who serves as an infection, prevention and control specialist at WRNMMC. Hand hygiene ranks about 40 percent or less in hospitals worldwide, he added.



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chris Krucke

Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Jeffrey B. Clark, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center director, says, "The point is not to do remarkable things, but to do the ordinary with the conviction of its immense importance," quoting Teilhard de Chardin, a French philosopher and Jesuit priest, while reminding staff of the importance of hand washing.

Litten and four others monitor hand hygiene in 18 areas of WRNMMC inpatient areas, and oversee 56 clinics participating in hand hygiene surveys.

"Our last compliance [as-

essment] for inpatient areas was 86 percent," added the infection control specialist. Litten attributes the medical center's success to leadership. "Leadership has recognized it's important, and

that's what's vital to get staff involved.

The medical center is scheduled to launch a new hand washing poster campaign soon, featuring Walter Reed Bethesda leaders Clark and

Chief of Staff Navy Capt. Sarah L. Martin in an effort to rekindle the initiative launched in December 2007 at the former National Naval Medical Center.

The infection control specialist continued stating he and his staff have monitored the medical center's inpatient units as well as the outpatient units in the clinics once a month for the last seven years to raise awareness and assess hand hygiene.

The outpatient clinics use a card system which relies on patients to complete a survey card to indicate if their physician, nurse, tech, medic or corpsmen wash their hands. Recruiting the help of patients to monitor hand hygiene helps the medical center satisfy a national patient safety goal, Litten explained.

So which is better: old-fashioned soap and water or alcoholic gel cleanser?

"The CDC recommendation is, unless your hands are visibly soiled, that you use the alcohol gel," Litten said. "That's actually better than going to the sink and using soap and water. The second best of

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101 Critical Days of Summer Safety Tips: Beware of the Heat

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chris Krucke
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

Summer is officially here, and with it comes the heat and humidity. Unfortunately, in the United States, heat is one of the leading causes of weather-related deaths, according to the National Weather Service (NWS).

The NWS, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), reports in August 2003 a record heat wave in Europe claimed an estimated 50,000 lives. In 1995, more than 700 deaths in the Chicago area were attributed to the heat. During a heat wave in the United States in 1980, an estimated 1,250 people died from heat-related injury.

According to NOAA, sum-



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chris Krucke

Master-at-Arms 1st Class Troy Felton, of Naval Support Activity Bethesda Security, takes a drink from a water bottle during a break. Health care providers recommend staying hydrated by drinking water, approximately 12 quarts per day, especially during hot and humid weather.

mers in the Washington, D.C. area are hot and humid with a July daily average of 79.8 degrees and average daily relative humidity around 66 percent, which can cause moder-

ate personal discomfort. July and August are on average the hottest months with the highest humidity here in the Washington D.C. area. Temperatures average nearly 90

degrees, but can often reach more than 100 degrees. NOAA officials add North American summers are hot, with most summers experiencing heat waves in one or more parts of the United States, and the Washington, D.C. area is no exception.

The NWS forecast office issues heat-related products as conditions warrant:

- **Excessive Heat Outlooks** are issued when the potential exists for an excessive heat event in the next three to seven days.

- **Excessive Heat Watches** are issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 24 to 72 hours.

- **Excessive Heat Warning/Advisories** are issued when an excessive heat event is expected in the next 36 hours.

The homepage for Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's (WRNMMC) in-

tranet includes the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature, a composite temperature used to estimate the effect of temperature, humidity, wind speed (wind chill) and visible and infrared radiation (usually sunlight) on humans. It is used by industrial hygienists, athletes, and the military to determine appropriate exposure levels to high temperatures.

In addition, WRNMMC Trauma and Emergency Management officials offer measures that may help you recognize and respond to the warning signs of heat-related trouble. They explain your best defense against heat-related illness is prevention. Staying cool and making smart decisions concerning your fluid intake, activities and clothing during hot weather can help you remain safe and healthy.

There are three main condi-

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USO

Continued from pg. 4

working with the elderly, children and animals," said Button.

Nicole Russell, manager of public policy at Discovery Communications, was very excited to be part of a team of 15 volunteers who hosted the barbecue at NSAB.

"It is important for us to make that outreach to the community where we live and work. One thing we're looking at is expanding our partnerships when it comes to outreach with military families and veterans and active duty," said Russell.

Service members lined up to be served food by volunteers and relax outside on the patio for lunch.

"It was really nice of the volunteers [from Discovery Communications] to come here and barbecue for us today," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Alberto Bruzon, a Culinary Specialist at NSAB. "Barbecues boost morale and it'll be nice to see Discovery interact more with USO with other activities."

Discovery Communication continues to look at various avenues to impact military members, families, and veterans, according to Russell.

"I think it is really important for us to have this conversation and figure out what makes sense and how can we be helpful to that company [community]," said Russell. "We actually have a significant veteran population at Discovery. We have these groups called Employee Resource Groups or ERGs and we have Veterans Employee Resource Groups so Veteran employees can get together for certain activities or just to meet up and discuss what they do at the company. So it's a support group really."

According to Buttons, employees at Discovery Communications are involved in creating opportunities for military families and veterans with various activities.

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HYDRATE

Continued from pg. 7

tions physicians at WRNMMC recommend to watch out for during the hot summer days: heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The following scenarios may assist you in knowing and preventing the signs of heat illness to have a safe summer.

You and your work-out partner go for an afternoon jog. About a mile into your run, your partner complains his leg is tightening up and is pulsating.

What your partner is experiencing a heat cramp, which is best treated by applying firm pressure on the cramping muscles or a gentle massage to relieve the spasm. Also, give sips of water to replace fluid loss.

Scenario II — you and a friend decide to take a long bike ride on a nice summer day. A few miles into the ride, you notice your friend isn't looking well. He complains of a headache, feeling a little nauseated and dizzy. His legs become weak and his skin feels cool and clammy.

Watch out! Your friend might be experiencing heat exhaustion, which is due to loss of water and salt through sweat.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends if someone experiences heat exhaustion, first, find some shade (under a tree or next to a building), next have the person hydrate, with either water or a sports drink, but not with an alcoholic or caffeinated beverage. Lastly, cool the body by placing a damp cloth or towel over the head and loosening the clothing.

Scenario III — you decide to play flag football and during the course of the game, you notice an opposing player staggering and looking a little confused. He bends to his knees and starts to breathe rapid, shallow breaths. You ask him if he's okay. He just looks up and you notice his skin is red, he's not sweating and his pupils are dilated. It also appears he's about to pass out.

He is experiencing a heat stroke, a serious condition experienced when the body's cooling system stops working and core temperature rises to dangerous levels. If ignored, heat stroke can lead to death. Time is now critical. The CDC recommends calling

911 immediately, then placing the victim in the shade. If there isn't shade, use your body to block the sun and pour cool water in a towel or on his shirt and place it on his head. If you can get ice from a cooler or even a cold soda from a vending machine, put it in a sock and place it on his neck to accelerate cooling. While waiting for medical help to arrive spray or pour cool water on him and fan his body. Do not give victims of heat stroke fluids.

"We have seen all types of cases from heat exhaustion to heat stroke," said Lt. Col. B. Kent Weathers, director of Trauma and Emergency Management at WRNMMC.

"In the summer months when the heat starts to increase, we do tend to see an increase of patients with heat injuries," Weathers said. "It's hard to tell who is going to come in. We can have the young healthy well-conditioned active duty [service member], or we can have the elderly 65-year-old person who was just out shopping."

Emily Martin, safety specialist at WRNMMC, provided a few precautions before you head out in the heat.

"It is important to limit exposure," Martin said. "If you are out in the sun for long periods of time, it's recommended you wear a hat that can cover your ears and neck, and UV sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun's rays."

"The main thing that people don't realize is they should eat small light meals, not heavy meals, and take lots of water breaks," Martin suggested. She added water breaks should occur at least every 15 minutes.

Officials from the NWS also recommend avoiding foods high in protein because they increase metabolic heat, and avoid using salt tablets, unless directed to do so by a physician.

For a more information concerning heat exhaustion or heat stroke, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>.

NURSE

Continued from pg. 6

the first two-star general chief of the Air Force Nurse Corps. In the forward to the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General document, "A Fit Fighting Force, The Air Force Nursing Service Chronology," Brannon added the first customers of Air Force nurses were Air Force members, families and retirees. "Today, we often provide nursing care to other federal employees, Americans in the private sector, and patients in countries around the world."

"The mission of the Air Force Medical Service has basically remained the same [throughout its history] — to provide medical support necessary to maintain the highest degree of combat readiness and effectiveness of the USAF, or in today's words, 'to maintain a fit, fighting force,'" Brannon continued. "Air Force nurses have contributed to this mission in both wartime and peacetime, providing leadership, caring and quality care."

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WASH

Continued from pg. 7

- course is soap and water.
- Litten offered his top 10 reasons to wash your hands.
1. Germs are hearty. They can survive on anything you touch for hours. According to the CDC, viruses and bacteria can live on surfaces like tables and doorknobs for two hours or longer.
 2. Twenty seconds of scrubbing with soap and water can keep you from getting sick. So try counting slowly to 20 or sing the Happy Birthday song twice -to yourself!
 3. The World Health Organization believes that proper hand washing could save more lives around the world than any vaccine or medical intervention. Hand washing is so important because it interrupts the transmission of disease by getting rid of airborne pathogens like bacteria and viruses.
 4. Almost 50 percent of all foodborne illness outbreaks can be prevented by proper hand washing. You can keep your family safer by washing your hands before and after working with or eating food.
 5. Every sneeze can spread thousands of bacteria-filled droplets. If possible, experts recommend sneezing into a tissue, or turning your head and

- sneezing into your shoulder or elbow.
6. Wash with soap. Rinsing with water only removes visible dirt, not invisible bacteria. Alcohol-based gels can also be effective against invisible germs.
 7. You can contract E. coli (food poisoning), salmonella (food poisoning) or staph aureus just by shaking hands with someone who is infected. We don't want you to be anti-social, but be sure to wash your hands as often as possible during the day to prevent transmitting diseases.
 8. Clean hands could help prevent many of the 76 million cases of diarrhea and upset stomachs in the U.S. every year. Other preventive measures include proper handling of food - cooking meat, poultry and eggs thoroughly, refrigerating leftovers promptly and washing fruits and vegetables.
 9. Two hundred different viruses cause the common cold and millions of Americans spread the disease each year through hand-to-hand contact. Children need extra reminders about hand washing because they are especially vulnerable to picking up viruses and passing them along to others.
 10. According to the CDC, hand washing is the single most effective way to stop the spread of disease.
- For more information concerning hand hygiene, visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/>.

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